AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ANTHOLOGY

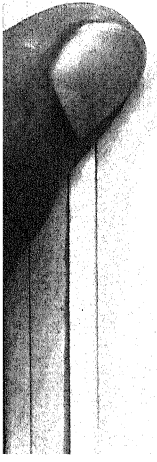
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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Introduction

It would seem to be the duty of everyone who has the slightest chance of being listened to, to contribute to the formation of a sounder literary criticism at a time that is somewhat suffering from the need of it. Impelled by this feeling, I have acceded to the suggestion that I should write the following essay on the Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, by way of introduction to selections from the writings of the foremost poets of that period. Chosen strictly in conformity with that principle, and with the above object, it will be found that they are extracted from writers whose names are familiar to all educated persons, and that belong to the enduring storehouse of English literature. Were they at present as much read, and as justly estimated, as they deserve to be, this essay would have been unnecessary.

The division of literary periods into centuries must inevitably be more or less

arbitrary, since their distinctive styles perforce overlap each other. Thus, though Dryden died in A.D. 1700, he is closely allied, through the metre and manner of many of his poems, with the eighteenth century. Were it otherwise, the well-known comparison of him with Pope by Doctor Johnson, in his Lives of the Poets, would have been, if not impossible, at least irrelevant. Byron was born in 1788, but did not publish *Hours of Idleness* till 1807. Yet the style and tone of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* remind one of what we associate with the eighteenth century rather than with what we associate with the nineteenth, and the note he then struck recurs again and again in his poetry; and many readers will remember the strenuous battle he waged for the former against the latter in his controversy concerning Pope with Bowles. Again, Scott, though generally regarded as one of the most influential, if not the foremost, of the authors of what is called the Romantic Revival in English Poetry, was, as a writer of verse, almost wholly under the influence of the lucid, direct, and manly poetic style of the period usually spoken of as pre-eminently the classic period, though the subjects of his poems doubtless belong for the most part to the later and more ro-

mantic time. For convenience, therefore, there are included no poems, and no selections from poems, in this volume, that were not published between A.D. 1700 and A.D. 1800; though, to speak frankly, that defrauds the eighteenth century of some of the literary laurels that of right belong to it.

The most cursory survey of the past suggests the conclusion that some centuries have been more self-confident, more self-complacent, than others, and that while some have been modest, diffident, distrustful, and even depressed, concerning themselves, some have manifested striking self-satisfaction, and an arrogant attitude towards their predecessors. One is disposed to think the nineteenth century the most conspicuous offender in these respects, and there are indications that its habit of self-glorification, combined with depreciation of more remote epochs, may be continued in the new century on which we have lately entered. An absolutely judicial comparison among them would probably end by leading us to conclude that none are marked by any real superiority over the rest, but that some exhibit more activity in directions and departments of human energy for which we happen to feel special sympathy and admiration. Like individual critics, an age which

sits in self-appointed judgment on its predecessors, if it does nothing more, criticises itself, and affords us a criterion by which to estimate it in turn. Goethe used to say that you may generally surmise a man's character by observing what he ridicules. It would, I think, be at least equally safe to classify him by what he admires or depreciates. The point is not an unimportant one; for when its full significance is well grasped, one is protected against ill-balanced and incomplete comparisons. Not ordinary persons alone, but highly reputed historians as well, are in the habit of speaking of the Middle Ages as dark, and the Renaissance which succeeded it as a period when the mind was stirred from sloth and liberated from fetters. It is not easy for individual minds, and it is still more difficult for collective minds, to liberate themselves from the fetters of conventional speech; or it would probably occur to many who are at present unconscious of the fact that the real difference between the intellectual condition of the Middle Ages and the intellectual attitude of the Renaissance, is not that the first did not think at all, and that the second thought freely, actively, and expansively, but that one thought in a different way from the other, and that in these days we

much prefer the later to the earlier way, since it is more akin to our own.

I scarcely think it is an exaggeration to say that, in satisfaction with itself, and in depreciation of other periods, no century has equalled the nineteenth century; and much, if not most, of its self-flattering comparison has been devoted to its immediate forerunner, the eighteenth, with which it is my task here to deal. Looked at from a suitable distance, and in its broad aspect, the eighteenth century strikes one as dominated by Reason, if by Reason be meant the reasoning faculty or habit. But if people reason rationally, they must have something to reason about, and something to reason about the substance and elements of which are more or less accurately known. The eighteenth century was interested in and occupied itself mainly concerning Social Man; and this disposition was naturally shown in its literature, its poetry included. Had its poets reasoned about Man, thus defined, in the same way exactly as they did about him in prose, and only put their reasoning into verse, they would not have produced poetry at all. Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "Reason in her most exalted mood", and Matthew Arnold's phrase, "Reason touched by

Emotion", come opportunely here to the purpose of our investigation. None but those rendered inaccessible to evidence by an exaggerated and exclusive worship of romantic emotion would dream of denying that the poetry of the eighteenth century, which was animated and suffused by reason, was in some degree touched by emotion, though it would be a quite defensible position to argue that it is not touched by emotion sufficiently. Examples furnish the best means of submitting such aspersions to an adequate touchstone, and, with this object in view, I will cite a few familiar passages that will serve as a sufficient test. After enumerating, in *The Traveller*, the various foreign lands he had visited, Goldsmith thus goes on, in what seems to me a sustained tone of exquisite pathos, thus to express himself:—

"Where'er I roam, whatever Realms I see,
My heart, untravelled, fondly turns to thee,
Still to my brother turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags, at each remove, a lengthening chain.

.

But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,

Impelled with steps unceasing to pursue
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view,
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allured from far, yet, as I follow, flies,
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And finds no spot of all the world my own.

.

Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.

.

Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I yearn, amid these scenes, to find
Some spot to real happiness consigned,
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest."

The same deep feeling, and the like presence of pathetic expression, are to be seen, not only in passages of *The Deserted Village*, but throughout the whole poem, which, as a boy, one knew by heart, and most of which lingers in one's memory still.

"In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs, and God has given my share,

I still had hopes my latest hour to crown,
Amid these humble bowers to lay me down,
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
.
And, as a hare whom horn and hounds pursue,
Pants to the place from which at first it drew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return, and die at home at last.
O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreat from cares that never can be mine,
How blest is he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease.
.
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way,
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be past."

In all these passages the notes both of human nature and of humanity are clearly and distinctly struck. What really happens in this world, and happens to all more or less, is their subject-matter, and they are handled with deep imaginative and emotional sympathy, and with perfect mastery over verse and music. If these are not the

natural and enduring elements of poetry, one knows not where to find them. There is no straining after effect, no posturing, no literary affectation, but every line is prompted by what in another line is called "the luxury of doing good". Throughout them we hear the tenderly-breathed subconsciousness of "the silent sorrow at the heart of things". But this prompts to no rebellion against the universal dispensation, nor to violent and spasmodic ejaculations. The feeling and emotion expressed are not sudden and passing, but profound and lasting; and compassion is manifested, with pious moderation, for the sufferings of men and women generally, not for individual natures supposed to be exceptional, of whom we have heard too much in poetry of an epoch nearer to our own. Yet that Goldsmith could rise to a wide conception and just generalization concerning the world's affairs in general, and express that sentiment in elevated adequate, and, I should say, prophetic language, the following passage from *The Deserted Village* amply testifies:—

"O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!

How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms, by thee to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own;
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till, sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread their ruin round."

The antithesis, however, on which the literary criticism of the nineteenth century has so frequently and all but universally expatiated, between its poetry and the poetry of the eighteenth century, would perhaps be found to turn mainly on the estimate as a poet of Alexander Pope. For Matthew Arnold I share the warm admiration of most men of letters, and the personal liking he inspired in those who knew him; and that he was a sane and searching critic of poetry few, if any, would deny. But I have always felt it was in a moment of excessive and inadvertent amiability towards writers of his acquaintance, and what is vaguely called the "spirit of the time", that he incidentally made the observation that the poetry of Pope perhaps be-

longed rather to our prose than to our poetic literature. I can conceive no concession to the prejudices of others more ununfortunate or more unsound; and, were he among us to-day, I should not hesitate to ask him how he came to allow himself to be entrapped in it, for I am sure he could not possibly have seriously thought it. One can see the smile of deprecating self-exculpation that would have come over his face, and the frank confession of critical aberration to which he would have manfully confessed. I can answer for it that no such opinion was for one moment entertained by Tennyson, with whom, in his garden at Aldworth, I once had an interesting talk respecting Pope, following on one concerning Milton. He spoke with the most prompt admiration of Pope, and, when I asked him if he did not think that, if the lines in the *Epilogue to the Satires*:—

"Yes I am proud: I must be proud to see
Men not afraid of God, afraid of me",

would not have been quoted as an example of the sublime, had they figured in a famous tragedy, he readily and cordially assented; and Tennyson will surely be accepted as one of the foremost poets of the

Romantic movement, though in reality rarely ceasing, though I must not linger on that point here, to be classical in expression. Matthew Arnold, to revert to him for a moment, wisely counselled his readers to think, in respect of sanctity, with the saints, and, in regard to poetry, with the poets; and Byron never desisted from proclaiming his enthusiastic admiration for Pope as a poet. "I will show more *imagery*", he writes, "in twenty lines of Pope than in any equal length of quotation in English poesy", and he proceeds to justify the assertion by quoting and analysing the passage on Lord Hervey, in the character of *Sporus*. Referring to Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, which has been so much belittled by recent critics, I suspect because Pope was describing the feelings of other people, and not his own, he writes: "Such a subject never was, nor ever could be, treated with more delicacy, mingled, at the same time, with such true and intense passion", and I suppose Byron knew something about true and intense passion. "All that it had of passionate", he continues, "Pope has beautified; all that it had of holy he has hallowed." In another passage, evidently dictated by enthusiastic emotion, Byron writes: "Nei-

ther time, nor distance, nor grief, nor age, can ever diminish my reverence for him who is the great moral poet of all times, of all climes, of all feelings, and of all stages of existence. The delight of my boyhood, the study of my manhood, perhaps (if allowed me to attain it) he may be the consolation of my age. His poetry is the Book of Life. Without canting, and yet without neglecting religion, he has collected all that a good and great man can gather together of moral wisdom clothed in consummate beauty."

Great though be the authority of Byron on such a subject, once more let me betake myself to the only conclusive test, that of quotation from Pope's poetry, in support of the contention that he has written page after page of reason touched by emotion, in adequate poetic form.

"Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears Him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world, in depth of wood embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,

Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold:
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.
Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, if Man 's unhappy, God 's unjust;
If Man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the God of God."

Pantheism has been, in a vague sort of way, much in fashion, both in verse and conversation, during the last fifty years. Its advocates might turn, if they would, to Pope's eighteenth-century exposition of that creed.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph, that adores and burns:
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects and equals all."

I would recommend my readers to turn to the first thirty lines of Epistle II in the same poem. But the closing passage of the entire poem must not be omitted here, its evidence is so valuable.

"Come then, my friend! my genius! come along;
O master of the poet and the song!
And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,
To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
Teach me, like thee, in various nature wise,
To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
From grave to gay, from lively to severe;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.

Oh! while along the stream of time thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame;
Say shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes,
Shall then this verse to future age pretend
Thou wert my guide, philosopher, and friend!
That, urged by thee, I turned the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
For wit's false mirror, held up Nature's light;
Shew'd erring pride, Whatever is is right;
That Reason, Passion, answer one great aim;
That true Self-Love and Social are the same;
That Virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is, Ourselves to know."

In estimating the relative position of a poet, and the relative value of his poetry, we should not forget its volume, if excellent on the whole, but, still more, its variety. This is a point of which recent criticism and popular taste have lost sight almost entirely. If Shakespeare had written nothing but *Hamlet*, he would still have to be regarded as the poet possessing the largest amount of the highest poetic genius. But that he should have written likewise *Romeo*

and Juliet and *A Winter's Tale* necessarily increases enormously our estimate of his powers. In thinking of Pope, we must, if we are to weigh him in just scales, think of him not merely as the author of this or that work of his, but as the author of the *Satires*, and *The Rape of the Lock*, and *Moral Essays*, and the *Essay on Man*, and *The Dunciad*, and *Eloisa to Abelard*, to say nothing of his translation of the *Iliad*. It is the immense amount of poetic ground he covers that should not be overlooked. *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* are not more unlike each other, in subject and treatment, than are the *Essay on Man* and *The Rape of the Lock*. De Quincey, a literary critic of rare taste and penetration, and one anything but prepossessed in favour of Pope, writes of *The Rape of the Lock* as "the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers". Hazlitt affirmed it to be the most excellent specimen of poetic filigree work ever invented, to be made of gauze, and spangles, and everything glittering. "A toilet", he continues, "is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the Goddess of Vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of

poetic diction, to set off the meanest things." He concludes by asserting that the poem is the perfection of the mock-heroic. Even a more recent critic, an eminent university professor of our own time, allows that it is so exquisite in its peculiar style of art as to make the task of searching for faults almost hopeless, and that of commending beauties simply impertinent; and Byron has told us that if we are in search of invention, imagination, and character, we had better look for them in this poem, which had no predecessor, and has had no happy successor in the language.

I have purposely cited the opinions of writers nearer to our own time, and who might not unreasonably be surmised to have some bias in favour of the modern Romantic School. But there were critics before the second half of the nineteenth century, and their estimate of *The Rape of the Lock* must not be omitted from consideration. Warton's is still a commanding name in literary criticism, and, amongst other eulogiums by him on *The Rape of the Lock*, he recalls that some of the most candid among French critics had begun to acknowledge that their language possesses no poem in point of sublimity and majesty equal to *Paradise Lost*, and there-

upon adds that it may with like truth be affirmed that, in point of delicacy, elegance, and fine-turned raillery, in which the French might be expected to excel over every other people, they have nothing to show equal to *The Rape of the Lock.* Johnson was of opinion that if *The Rape of the Lock* should not be called original, nothing original can ever be written, and that in it new things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. Finally, Johnson justly remarked that the subtle delicacies of humour, satire, language, and invention which mingle largely with the more obvious beauties of *The Rape of the Lock* can be perceived only when the taste has been quickened by the early culture of letters. This observation is peculiarly applicable to the taste of today, which has, for the most part, not been quickened by "the early culture of letters", in the sense, which is the just sense, of the phrase employed by Johnson. Just as no one quite *understands* the English language who has not a moderately familiar acquaintance with Latin, since the one so largely underlies the other, so no one can be a correct judge of the poetry of any one period, or any one nation, unless he have a fairly good acquaintance with the poetry

of other periods, and with the literature of other communities; and of the vast majority of English readers of to-day, even of those who are commonly spoken of as educated, assuredly that could not be truthfully affirmed. Of equal pertinence is Byron's incidental observation, that the beauty of Pope's versification has withdrawn attention from his other excellencies, since the vulgar eye will rest more on the splendour and perfect fit of the uniform than on the quality of the troops; that, because his versification is perfect, it is widely assumed that it is only perfect and nothing more; that, because his truths are so clearly put, he has no invention; and, because he is always intelligible, it is taken for granted that he has no genius. Furthermore, he points out, we are sneeringly told that he is "The Poet of Reason", adding "as if this was a reason for his being no poet!" Perhaps I ought to say that I should not have cited all the foregoing critical testimony in favour of a just estimate of Pope as a poet, if I did not, on the whole, agree with it.

It may, perhaps, seem that I have lingered somewhat long on the writings and various estimates of Pope, and have devoted to these too much of the space

at my disposal. But, without saying that, in the sphere of poetry, Pope *is* the eighteenth century, indeed far from saying it, since to do so would be to commit the error I have indicated of taking the half for the whole and overlooking the important point of variety, nevertheless, in the thoughts of most people of to-day, Pope stands out, and rightly stands out, as the leading type and chief representative of the poetry of that period, and so his works occupy a greater number of pages in this volume than those of any other writer. But the poems of the eighteenth century can, without losing in any respect their distinctive character, include poetry which no competent reader would for a moment imagine to be by Pope. His works are not only social, in the largest and most comprehensive sense of the word, but likewise in the narrower sense that their themes are for the most part suggested by society of a refined and highly educated kind. He discourses but little, and only indirectly and inferentially, of the poor and humble. That was left to Goldsmith and Crabbe, and, if in a less degree, to Cowper. The element of pathos, so important and effective a one in poetry, was never sustained at greater length than in *The Deserted*

Village; and the pathos arises from true sympathy with the simple and the lowly. It likewise prompted and underlies most of *The Traveller.* In these poems we have not to do with what Gray calls

"Fears of the brave, and follies of the wise",

but the needs, hopes, emotions, of the modestly circumstanced, with every round of the clock. Goldsmith was not, like Pope, the intimate companion of the comfortably erudite, of scholarly and ambitious church dignitaries, and of the titled dilettanti of the day; nor could he have said, as Pope did, with almost pardonable arrogance:

" I condescend
Sometimes to call a Minister my friend".

On the contrary, his birth, education, and experience were amongst the more unpretentious but, perhaps, more tender spheres of life; and he might indeed have applied to himself the line from Virgil

Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

Everyone knows Gray's quatrain,

"To each his sufferings; all are men,
Condemned alike to groan;
The feeling, for another's pain,
The unfeeling, for his own".

Goldsmith sorrowed for both. But neither individual nor general suffering ever wrung from him, or from any eighteenth-century poet, those vociferations of rebellion and those sighs of pessimism that are only too prominent in the writers of verse in more modern times, alike in England, in France, and in Italy. In his own wise, pious language, "resignation gently sloped the way" for him, as for all his contemporaries. No such note was struck by any of them, as sounds in the verse of Leopardi, in *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and other poems of Shelley, and in a host of French writers of verse in later times; a note of insurrectionary bitterness against the general dispensation. The same humble resignation to, and reconcilement with, life as it is is uppermost again in the most celebrated of Gray's poems, *The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, which would never have been written, perhaps, by Pope, but which we owe to one even more cultured, who could boast an equal number of eminent friends, and was equally sheltered against what he pertinently calls "chill penury". *The Elegy* is perhaps not one of the greatest poems in the language, but it is perhaps the one best known, and therefore the most appreciated. It touches

the heart and enthralls the memory of all men, because everyone hears in it the music of humanity. Yet Gray had other strings than those touched so well in the *Elegy*. *The Bard*, *The Ode to Adversity*, and *The Progress of Poesy*, are lyrics of a very high order; and when the depreciators of eighteenth-century poetry ask where does it contain lines of sudden and subtle magic, one has only to quote "The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love", and "Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind", to answer the question conclusively.

The sympathy with the lowly born and humbly circumstanced, which has been indicated as suffusing the poetry of Goldsmith, is perhaps even yet more to be observed in that of Crabbe, at a time nearer to the close of the eighteenth century. Mr. Courthope, whose wide knowledge and whose penetrating and moderate judgment of poetry in several tongues must always command attention and respect, has said that after making full deduction for his defects, the chief of which are excessive realism and want of taste, Crabbe has left a body of powerful and original poetry. He declares Crabbe's powers of pathos to be extraordinary, his humour, when under proper control, admirable, and that, of all

the poets who have used the heroic couplet, Pope himself not excepted, and though the style of the two poets is as different as their genius, he is the best writer in verse of easy dialogue. How close, how deep, was his understanding of the poor, the following passage from *The Village* eloquently betrays:—

"Nor you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn complain,
To you the smoothest thing is smooth in vain;
O'ercome by labour and bow'd down by time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you when you pine for bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd shed?
Can their light tales your weighty griefs o'er-
power,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome hour?
Lo! where the heath, with withering brake
grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbour-
ing poor,
From thence a light of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land, and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high above the slender sheaf
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf,

O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around."

In order to show, by yet further examples, that the poetry of the eighteenth century is as various as it is voluminous, let us retrace our steps a few years, and recall the best-known of the poems by Collins, the *Ode to Evening*, and the *Ode to the Passions*. It may be doubted if any poem written in the nineteenth century offers a representation at once more true and more imaginative of external nature, than the *Ode to Evening*, and it is in this respect that nineteenth-century poets have repeatedly been said, and are generally believed, to show so great a superiority over those of the eighteenth. Indeed, some have gone so far as to assert that the superiority is one, not of degree, but of kind; since the kind is not to be found in the eighteenth century at all. It is quite impossible to maintain any such contention after reading the thirteen stanzas that compose the *Ode to Evening*. All the stanzas are equally striking and perfect, so I select

two, for passing quotation here, as the phrase is, at random.

"But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods,

"And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil."

This eighteenth-century *Ode to Evening* is, to say no more, the equal of Shelley's nineteenth-century *Ode to the West Wind.*

It is generally assumed, with an utter disregard of date, that Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge are nineteenth-century poets, the second of the three wholly so. Yet Burns was born in 1759, only nine years after the middle of the eighteenth century, and died four years before it closed. Wordsworth was born in 1770, and published *Lyrical Ballads*, in which are some of his best lyrics, in 1788, and in the same volume appeared the *Ancient Mariner*; and no one who bears in mind what has been said of *The Rape of the Lock* and Collins'

Ode to Evening would be disposed to contravene the statement that the *Ancient Mariner*, and some of Wordworth's most romantic descriptions of external nature, have as much kinship with them as with any poems indisputably belonging to the nineteenth century. The moment Burns writes in the English tongue proper, as distinguished from the Lower Scottish dialect, one perceives at once that he is writing under the influence of his eighteenth-century predecessors. But not sufficient note has been taken of the circumstance that, even in his poems written in the Scottish dialect, Burns had a predecessor in Robert Fergusson, who was born in 1750 and died in 1774, and whom, in that section of his poems to which he mainly, and justly, owes his fame, Burns much resembles. By whom are the following stanzas written? By Burns, or by Fergusson?

"Auld Reekie! thou 'rt the canty hole,
A bield for mony a caldrife soul,
Wha snugly at thine ingle loll,
Baith warm and couth,
While round they gar the bicker roll,
To weet their mouth.

"Let mirth abound, let social cheer
Invest the dawning of the year,

Let blithesome innocence appear
To crown our joy;
Nor envy, wi' sarcastic sneer,
Our bliss destroy.

"And thou, great God of aqua vitæ,
Wha sways the Empire of this city—
When fou we're sometimes capernoity—
Be thou prepared
To hedge us frae that black banditti,
The City Guard!

Let dispassionate readers peruse the above, which might be multiplied by quotations that would cover pages, or the *Ode to the Gowdspink—Anglicè*, goldfinch—beginning

"Frae fields where Spring her sweets has blawn
Wi' caller verdure o'er the lawn,
The gowdspink comes in new attire,
The brawest 'mang the whistling choir
That, ere the sun can clear his een,
Wi' glib notes sain the simmer's green,"

and they will, I think, inevitably feel that, had Fergusson and Burns been born south of the Border, English critics would have asseverated that the latter was an imitator and plagiarist of the former. But no one would have the courage, I imagine, to make such a suggestion in face of the storm

of angry and perfectly equitable protest that would burst from the whole Scottish race in defence of its national poet.

Much might be said here of Cowper, who, born in 1731, died in the last year of the eighteenth century, much, whether as a descriptive poet, a skilled and severe, but wholly serious, moral, and humane satirist, one imbued with the genuinely tender and philanthropic spirit often supposed to be the outcome of a later time, and as a supreme master of the heroic couplet, the most frequent form of expression with eighteenth-century poets; and there are minor eighteenth-century poets, such as Beattie, Thompson, Young, and Akenside, of whom nothing has been said whatever. For my object will have been attained if, after reading this essay, and re-reading the poems included in this volume, people perceive, or are recalled to the perception, that, should Shakespeare be left out of account, in respect of whom none is *aut par aut secundus*, the eighteenth century produced a body of poetry that may successfully stand comparison with that of any other period of English Literature. The Age of Reason that century may have been; and its poetry may in that respect display the dominant

tendency of the time. But it is the poetry of Reason touched by emotion, abounding in "subject-matter" and "criticism of life". It is not "Reason in her most exalted mood". For that we must turn to Shakespeare. But neither is it exaltation untouched by and devoid of reason or subject, as is so much later poetry that has been excessively extolled at its expense. This is not the place, nor this the occasion, to state the principles and the canons that underlie all the greater poetry, of whatever period it may be. But this short essay has been written in harmony with those principles, and those canons, as I understand them.

ALFRED AUSTIN.



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Alexander Pope



An Essay on Man



EPISTLE I

Argument of the Nature and State of Man with respect to the Universe

Of *Man* in the Abstract.—I. That we can judge only with regard to our *own system*, being ignorant of the *relations* of systems and things. II. That Man is not to be deemed *imperfect*, but a being suited to his *place* and *rank* in the creation, agreeable to the *general Order* of things, and conformable to *Ends* and *Relations* to him unknown. III. That it is partly upon his *ignorance* of *future* events, and partly upon the *hope* of a *future* state, that all his happiness in the present depends. IV. The *pride* of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more Perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The *impiety* of putting himself in the place of *God*, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations. V. The *absurdity* of conceiting himself the *final cause* of the creation, or expecting that per-

fection in the *moral* world, which is not in the *natural*. VI. The *unreasonableness* of his complaints against *Providence*, while on the one hand he demands the Perfections of the Angels, and on the other the bodily qualifications of the Brutes; though, to possess any of the *sensitive faculties* in a higher degree, would render him miserable. VII. That throughout the whole visible world, an universal *order* and *gradation* in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a *subordination* of creature to creature, and of all creatures to Man. The gradations of *sense*, *instinct*, *thought*, *reflection*, *reason*; that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties. VIII. How much farther this *order* and *subordination* of living creatures may extend, above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected *creation* must be destroyed. IX. The *extravagance*, *madness*, and *pride*, of such a desire. X. The consequence of all, the *absolute submission* due to Providence, both as to our *present* and *future state*.

Awake, my ST JOHN! leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of Kings.
Let us (since Life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die)
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man;

A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A Wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot;
Or Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar;
Eye Nature's walks, shoot Folly as it flies,
And catch the Manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;
But vindicate the ways of God to Man.

I

Say first, of God above, or Man below,
What can we reason, but from what we know?
Of Man, what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
'T is ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other Planets circle other suns,

What vary'd Being peoples ev'ry star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are.
But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Look'd thro'? or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain, that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

II

Presumptuous Man! the reason wouldst thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
Why JOVE's Satellites are less than JOVE?
Of Systems possible, if 't is confest

That Wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must full or not coherent be,
And all that rises, rise in due degree;
Then, in the scale of reas'ning life, 't is plain,
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has plac'd him wrong?
Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, tho' labour'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serves to second, too, some other use.
So Man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
'T is but a part we see, and not a whole.
When the proud steed shall know why man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;

When the dull Ox, why now he breaks
the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God:
Then shall Man's pride and dulness com-
prehend
His actions', passions', being's, use and
end;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd;
and why
This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n
in fault;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measur'd to his state and
place;
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or
there?
The blest to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.

III

Heav'n from all creatures hides the
book of Fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present
state:
From brutes what men, from men what
spirits know:

Or who could suffer Being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy Reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never Is, but always To be blest:
The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind

Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To Be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV

Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy Opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
Say, here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,

Yet cry, If Man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If Man alone ingross not Heav'n's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the GOD of GOD.
In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of ORDER, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

V

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose, renew,
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;

For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."
But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No ('t is reply'd) the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began:
And what created perfect?"—Why then Man?
If the great end be human Happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can Man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of show'rs and sun-shine, as of Man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,

As Men for ever temp'rate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'n's design,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows but He, whose hand the light'ning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms;
Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
From pride, from pride, our very reas'ning springs;
Account for moral, as for nat'ral things:
Why charge we Heav'n in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.
Better for Us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But ALL subsists by elemental strife;
And Passions are the elements of Life.
The gen'ral ORDER, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI

What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,

And little less than Angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
Nature to these, without profusion, kind,
The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heav'n unkind to Man, and Man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all?
The bliss of Man (could Pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not Man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, Man is not a Fly.
Say what the use, were finer optics giv'n,

T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If Nature thunder'd in his op'ning ears,
And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heav'n had left him still
The whisp'ring Zephyr, and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?

VII

Far as Creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:
Mark how it mounts, to Man's imperial race,
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:

Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood:
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine!
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew?
How Instinct varies in the grov'ling swine,
Compar'd, half-reas'ning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that, and Reason, what a nice barrier;
For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and Reflection how ally'd;
What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide:
And Middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdu'd by thee alone,
Is not thy Reason all these pow'rs in one?

VIII

See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of Being! which from God began,
Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from Infinite to thee,
From thee to Nothing. — On superior pow'rs
Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroy'd:
From Nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the Whole must fall.
Let Earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
Planets and Suns run lawless thro' the sky;

Let ruling Angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
Being on Being wreck'd, and world on world;
Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And Nature trembles to the throne of God.
All this dread ORDER break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—O Madness! Pride! Impiety!

IX

What if the foot, ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspir'd to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repin'd
To serve mere engines to the ruling Mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another, in this gen'ral frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing MIND of ALL ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same;

Great in the earth, as in th' æthereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile Man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns:
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.

X

Cease then, nor ORDER Imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r,

Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not see;
All Discord, Harmony not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good:
And, spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

Prologue to the Satires



P. Shut, shut the door, good John![1] fatigued I said,
Tye up the knocker, say I 'm sick, I 'm dead.
The Dog-star rages! nay 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, thro' my Grot they glide,
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the Church is free,
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:

[1] John Serle, his servant.

Pitholeon libell'd me—"but here's a letter
Informs you, Sir, 't was when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curl invites to dine,
He 'll write a *Journal*, or he 'll turn Divine."
Bless me! a packet.—"'T is a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse."
If I dislike it, "Furies, death, and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the stage."
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The Play'rs and I are, luckily, no friends.
Fir'd that the house reject him, "'Sdeath I 'll print it,
And shame the fools—Your int'rest, Sir, with Lintot."
Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much:
"Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch."
All my demurs but double his attacks;
At last he whispers, "Do; and we go snacks."
Glad of a quarrel, strait I clap the door,
Sir, let me see your works and you no more.
'T is sung, when Midas' Ears began to spring,
(Midas, a sacred person and a King)

His very Minister who spy'd them first,
(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak, or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?

A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous things.
I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;
Keep close to Ears, and those let asses prick,
'T is nothing—

P. Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an Ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus! round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:
Pit, box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a Scribler? break one cobweb thro',

No duty broke, no father disobey'd.
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not Wife,
To help me thro' this long disease, my Life,
To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy Art and Care,
And teach, the Being you preserv'd, to bear.
But why then publish? Granville the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth inflam'd with early praise,
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read,
Ev'n mitred Rochester would nod the head,
And St. John's self (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms receiv'd one Poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence
While pure Description held the place of Sense?

Like gentle Fanny's was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd, I was not in debt.
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober Critic come abroad;
If wrong, I smiled; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley down to pidling Tibalds:
Each wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each Word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small Critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespear's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms

Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excus'd them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
As man's true merit 't is not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That Casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can *guess?*
The Bard whom pilfer'd Pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a Crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year;
He, who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
And He, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:
And He, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not Poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest Satire bad *translate*,

And own'd that nine such Poets made a
Tate.
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar,
and chafe!
And swear, not ADDISON himself was safe.
Peace to all such! but were there One
whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame in-
spires;
Blest with each talent and each art to
please,
And born to write, converse, and live with
ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule
alone,
Bear like the Turk, no brother near the
throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous
eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to
rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil
leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to
sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieg'd,

And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if ATTICUS were he!
What tho' my Name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plaister'd posts, with claps, in capitals?
Or smoaking forth, a hundred hawkers load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the Race that write;
I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight:
Poems I heeded (now be-rym'd so long)
No more than thou, great GEORGE! a birth-day song.
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;
Nor like a puppy, daggled thro' the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;

Nor at Rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd, and cry'd,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sate full-blown Bufo puff'd by ev'ry quill;
Fed with soft Dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His Library (where busts of Poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye:
But still the Great have kindness in reserve,
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.

May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill!
May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!
So when a Statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,
Or simple pride for flatt'ry makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Blest be the *Great*! for those they take away,
And those they left me; for they left me GAY;
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My Verse, and QUEENSB'RY weeping o'er thy urn!
Oh let me live my own, and die so too!
(To live and die is all I have to do:)
Maintain a Poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please:
Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a Minister my friend.
I was not born for Courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my pray'rs;

Can sleep without a Poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.
Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'ns! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has Life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
"I found him close with Swift."—
"Indeed? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus) something will come out."
'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will.
"No, such a Genius never can lie still;"
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first Lampoon Sir Will or Bubo makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When ev'ry Coxcomb knows me by my *Style*?
Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed Virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbour's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or Beauty in distress,

Who loves a Lye, lame slander helps about,
Who writes a Libel, or who copies out:
That Fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame:
Who can *your* merit *selfishly* approve,
And show the *sense* of it without the *love*;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honour, injur'd, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lye not, must at least betray:
Who to the Dean, and silver bell can swear,
And sees at Cannons what was never there;
Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make Satire a Lampoon, and Fiction Lye.
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus tremble---
A. What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,

This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar Toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.

Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
This dreaded Sat'rist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress:
So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhym'd for Moor.
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lye.
To please a Mistress, one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife:
Let Budgel charge low Grubstreet on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his Will;
Let the two Curls of Town and Court, abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse.
Yet why? that Father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbour fool:
That harmless Mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!

Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.
Of gentle blood (part shed in Honour's cause,
While yet in Britain Honour had applause)
Each parent sprung—
A. What fortune, pray?—
P. Their own,
And better got, than Bestia's from the throne.
Born to no Pride, inheriting no Strife,
Nor marrying Discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.
No Courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an Oath, nor hazarded a Lye.
Un-learn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtile art,
No language, but the language of the heart.
By Nature honest, by Experience wise,
Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise;
His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me, thus to live, and thus to die!

Who sprung from Kings shall know less
joy than I.
O Friend! may each domestic bliss be
thine!
Be no unpleasing Melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing Age,
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed
of Death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking
eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky!
On cares like these if length of days at-
tend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, pre-
serve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a
QUEEN.
A. Whether that blessing be deny'd or
giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to
Heav'n.

The Rape of the Lock

CANTO FIRST

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing—This verse to CARYL, Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
Oh say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?
Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And ope'd those eyes that must eclipse the day:

Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian SYLPH prolong'd the balmy rest:
'T was He had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head.
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say.
Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If e'er one Vision touch thy infant thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught;
Of airy Elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-pow'rs,

With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd:
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
The light Militia of the lower sky:
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn two Pages and a Chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once inclos'd in Woman's beauteous mould;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when Woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,

And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre, after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first Elements their Souls retire:
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea.
The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of Air.
Know farther yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd:
For Spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting Maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,

The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Tho' Honour is the word with Men below.
Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the Gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdain'd, and love deny'd:
Then gay Ideas croud the vacant brain,
While Peers, and Dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And Garters, Stars, and Coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, Your Grace salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young Coquettes to roll,
Teach Infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau:
Oft, when the World imagine women stray,

The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their way,
Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals Levity may call,
Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.
Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I rang'd the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling Star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warn'd by the Sylph, oh pious maid, beware!

This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.
'T was then Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux;
Wounds, Charms, and Ardors, were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy head.
And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly Image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior Priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling, begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,

And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billets-doux.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

CANTO SECOND

Not with more glories, in th' etherial plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.

Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you 'll forget 'em all.
This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.

With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprize the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a Lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love—to Love an Altar built,
Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs give ear, and granted half his pray'r,

The rest, the winds dispers'd in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts oppress,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons strait his Denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair;
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seem'd but Zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light.
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,

Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd;
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He rais'd his azure wand, and thus begun.
Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear,
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest Æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,

Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms divine the British Throne.

Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;
To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow.

This day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;

But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honour, or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the Petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,

Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake
his sins,
Be stop'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's
eye:
Gums and Pomatums shall his flight re-
strain,
While clog'd he beats his silken wings
in vain;
Or Alum styptics with contracting pow'r
Shrink his thin essence like a rivel'd
flow'r:
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling Mill,
In fumes of burning Chocolate shall
glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!
He spoke; the spirits from the sails
descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph
extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they
wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of
Fate.

CANTO THIRD

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants, and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*
Mean while, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labours of the Toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Strait the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold, four Kings in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain
a flow'r,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer
pow'r;
Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty
band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their
hand;
And particolour'd troops a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful Nymph reviews her force
with care:
Let Spades be trumps! she said, and
trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable Lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept
the board.
As many more Manillio forc'd to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant
field.
Him Basto follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one Plebeian
card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in
years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,

Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd,
The rest, his many-colour'd robe conceal'd.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Lu,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black Tyrant first her victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with pow'rs combin'd

Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when dispers'd a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierc'd battalions dis-united fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now, (as oft in some distemper'd State)
On one nice Trick depends the gen'ral fate.
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: The King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,

And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoaking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repaste.
Strait hover round the Fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.

Coffee, (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 't is too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprites repair,

A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the Virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' Ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retir'd.
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring Forfex wide,
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urg'd the sheers, and cut the Sylph in twain,
(But airy substance soon unites again)
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.

Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are
cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe
their last;
Or when rich China vessels fall'n from
high,
In glitt'ring dust, and painted fragments
lie!
Let wreaths of triumph now my temples
twine,
(The Victor cry'd) the glorious Prize is
mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in
air,
Or in a coach-and-six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a Lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order
blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations
give,
So long my honour, name, and praise
shall live!
What Time would spare, from Steel re-
ceives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of
Troy;

Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conqu'ring force of unresisting steel?

CANTO FOURTH

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Nor ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.
For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew,
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.
No chearful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd;
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.

The fair-ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant Vapour o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and Angels in machines.
Unnumber'd throngs on ev'ry side are seen,
Of bodies chang'd to various forms by Spleen.
Here living Tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose pye talks;
Men prove with child, as pow'rful fancy works,
And maids turn'd bottles, call aloud for corks.

Safe past the Gnome thro' this fantastic band,
A branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus address'd the pow'r—Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like Citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease

Which not the tears of brightest eyes
could ease:
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the
spleen.
The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his
pray'r.
A wond'rous Bag with both her hands she
binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the
winds;
There she collects the force of female
lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of
tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing
tears.
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly
mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph
he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he
rent,
And all the Furies issu'd at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.

O wretched maid! she spread her hands, and cry'd,
(While Hampton's echoes, wretched maid! reply'd)
Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrival'd shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'T will then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Expos'd thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?

Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!
She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what the devil?
Z—ds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapp'd his box.
It grieves me much (reply'd the Peer again)
Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,

(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clip'd from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.
But Umbriel, hateful Gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in tears;
On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said:
For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid

By love of Courts to num'rous ills betray'd.
Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant Northern land;
Where the gilt Chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful Lords to roam?
O had I stay'd, and said my pray'rs at home!
'T was this, the morning omens seem'd to tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring China shook without a wind,
Nay Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph too warn'd me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,

Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal sheers demands,
And tempts once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!

CANTO FIFTH

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful wav'd her fan;
Silence ensu'd, and thus the nymph began.
Say why are Beauties prais'd and honour'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,

Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
—Why round our coaches croud the white-glov'd Beaux,
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains:
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
Behold the first in virtue as in face!
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the small-pox, or chas'd old age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains, but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour still whate'er we lose?

And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.
So spoke the Dame, but no applause ensu'd;
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her Prude.
To arms, to arms! the fierce Virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks russle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and Heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And base, and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;

'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clap'd his glad wings, and sate to view the fight:
Prop'd on their bodkin spears, the Sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While thro' the press enrag'd Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng,
One dy'd in metaphor, and one in song.
"Oh cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cry'd Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,

"Those eyes are made so killing!"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flow'ry margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty hero, slain,
But, at her smile, the Beau reviv'd again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the Men's wits against the Lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold Lord with manly strength endu'd,
She with one finger and a thumb subdu'd:

Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of Snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
Boast not my fall (he cry'd) insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:

All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames,—but burn alive.
Restore the Lock! she cries; and all around
Restore the Lock! the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend 'till all the prize is lost!
The Lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees! with heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the Lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasur'd there.
There Heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And Beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.

There broken vows, and death-bed alms
are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of ribband
bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's
pray'rs,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of
heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoak a
flea,
Dry'd butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward
rise,
Tho' mark'd by none, but quick, poetic
eyes:
(So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns
withdrew,
To Proculus alone confess'd in view)
A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's Locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with dishevel'd
light.
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its progress thro' the
skies.
This the Beau monde shall from the
Mall survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest Lover shall for Venus take,

And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks thro' Galilæo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

The Dunciad



(CLOSING PASSAGE)

She comes! she comes! the sable Throne
behold
Of *Night* Primæval, and of *Chaos* old!
Before her, *Fancy's* gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying Rain-bows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal
plain;
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand op-
prest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret
might,
Art after *Art* goes out, and all is Night.
See skulking *Truth* to her old cavern
fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her
head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no
more.



Elegy

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD



The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
The mopeing owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

ELEGY

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;

Hands, that the rod of empire might have
sway'd,
Or wak'd to extasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample
page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er
unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean
bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that, with daunt-
less breast,
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may
rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's
blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to com-
mand,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the chearful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our Ashes live their wonted Fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tales relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred Spirit shall enquire thy fate,

ELEGY

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown·
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Hymn to Adversity




Daughter of Jove, relentless Power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
The Bad affright, afflict the Best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain,
The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple Tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heav'nly Birth,
And bad to form her infant mind.
Stern, rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learn'd to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,

Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless
Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer Friend, the flatt'ring Foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are
again believ'd.

Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
Immers'd in rapt'rous thought pro-
found,
And Melancholy, silent maid,
With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm Charity, the general Friend,
With Justice, to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing
tear.

Oh! gently on thy Suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Not circled with the vengeful Band
(As by the Impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning
mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly
Poverty.

HYMN TO ADVERSITY

Thy form benign, oh goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic Train be there
To soften, not to wound, my heart.
The generous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love, and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself
a Man.

The Progress of Poesy



I. 1

Awake, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take:
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Thro' verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:
Now rowling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

I. 2

Oh! Sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,
Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft controul.

On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
Has curb'd the fury of his car,
And drop'd his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the scept'red hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feather'd king
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing:
Quench'd in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and light'nings of his eye.

I. 3

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Temper'd to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet-green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day
With antic Sport, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet:
To brisk notes in cadence beating,
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:
Where'er she turns, the Graces homage pay:
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,

Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant-Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

III. 1

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon stray'd,
To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless Child
Stretch'd forth his little arms, and smil'd.
"This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear,
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears."

III. 2

Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Extasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He pass'd the flaming bounds of Place
and Time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Clos'd his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous
car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear
Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder cloath'd, and long-
resounding pace.

III. 3

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy, hovering o'er,
Scatters from her pictur'd urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 't is heard no more—
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? Tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear,
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air:



The Deserted Village



Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;
Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's ling'ring blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paus'd on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighb'ring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age, and whisp'ring lovers made!

How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please:
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed:

These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, chok'd with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mould'ring wall;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;

A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supply'd.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence ally'd,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,

Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all
the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's
power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd
grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the haw-
thorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy
train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past
to pain.
In all my wand'rings round this world
of care,
In all my griefs—and God has giv'n my
share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me
down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by re-
pose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-
learn'd skill,

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last.
O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dang'rous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;

And, all his prospects bright'ning to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!
Sweet was the sound, when oft at ev'ning's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whisp'ring wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,

For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring:
She, wretched matron, forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change his place;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;

Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wand'rings but reliev'd their pain:
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch and shew'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,

Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declar'd how much he knew:
'T was certain he could write, and cypher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge:
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
For, ev'n though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd is for-got.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place:
The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;

'T is yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and an happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards ev'n beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful product still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supply'd;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:

Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land adorn'd for pleasure all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.
As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land by luxury betray'd:
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise;
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise:
While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band,

And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is deny'd.
If to the city sped — what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.

The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train:
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shiv'ring female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,

When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train,—
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;

Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murd'rous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,

And shudd'ring still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!

How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes plac'd above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;

Unfit in these degen'rate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decry'd,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be try'd,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or Winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;

That trade's proud empire hastes to swift
decay,
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time
defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.
When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glitt'ring towns, with wealth and splendour crown'd;
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flow'ry vale;
For me your tributary stores combine:
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine.
As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still:

Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleas'd with each good that Heav'n to man supplies:
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd,
Where my worn soul, each wand'ring hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.
But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam;
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,

Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.
But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear;
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign:
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And ev'n in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs, not far remov'd the date
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state;

At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies,
The canvas glow'd, beyond e'en Nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave:
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.
Yet still the loss of wealth is here supply'd
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade,
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.

By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd;
The sports of children satisfy the child.
Each nobler aim, represt by long controul,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:
As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defac'd by time and tott'ring in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey,
Where rougher climes a nobler race display;
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.
No product here the barren hills afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword:
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter ling'ring chills the lap of May:
No Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,

But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.
Yet, still, even here content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal
To make him loath his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep;
Or drives his vent'rous plow-share to the steep;
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage into day.
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys

His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board:
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.
Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And ev'n those ills that round his mansion rise
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
But bind him to his native mountains more.
Such are the charms to barren states assign'd;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd.
Yet let them only share the praises due:

If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest;
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies
That first excites desire, and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those pow'rs that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
Their level life is but a smould'ring fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow:
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, the manners run,
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.

Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons, cow'ring on the nest;
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispers'd, on tim'rous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.
To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain.
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murm'ring Loire?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the Zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous pow'r,

And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of three score.
So blest a life these thoughtless realms display;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away;
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temple here.
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or ev'n imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current: paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land;
From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleas'd; they give to get esteem;
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise;

For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought,
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frize with copper lace;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward, methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow;
Spreads its long arms amidst the wat'ry roar,

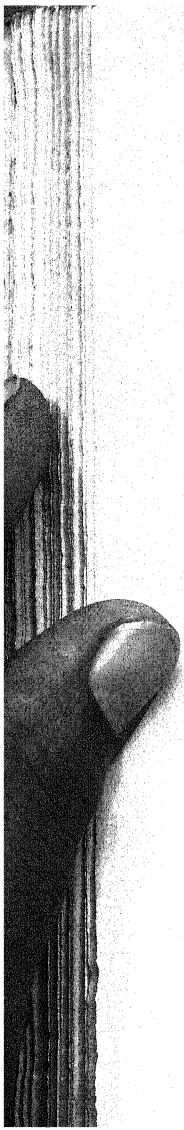
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore.
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile:
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,—
A new creation rescu'd from his reign.
Thus while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts:
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear;
Ev'n liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,

Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown:
Till time may come, when, stript of all her charms,
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toil'd and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonour'd die.
Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great:
Ye powers of truth that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire.
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone

By proud contempt or favour's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!
I only would repress them to secure:
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil;
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportion'd grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.
O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms;
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free,
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,

That bliss which only centres in the mind:
Why have I stray'd from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure;
Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
Our own felicity we make or find:
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted ax, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from pow'r but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

William Collins



The Passions  

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting;
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd;
Till once, 't is said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspir'd,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound:
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each, for madness rul'd the hour,
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear his hand, its skill to try,
 Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
 Ev'n at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rush'd; his eyes on fire
In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woeful measures wan Despair,
Low sullen sounds, his grief beguil'd,
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'T was sad by fits, by starts 't was wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure?
Still it whisper'd promis'd pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong,
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She call'd on Echo still through all the song;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smil'd, and wav'd her golden hair.
And longer had she sung, but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose:
He threw his blood-stain'd sword in thunder down,

And with a with'ring look
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe.
And ever and anon he beat
The doubling drum with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity at his side
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unalter'd mien,
While each strain'd ball of sight seem'd bursting from his head.
Thy numbers, Jealousy, to nought were fix'd,
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mix'd;
And now it courted Love, now raving call'd on Hate.
With eyes up-rais'd, as one inspir'd,
Pale Melancholy sat retir'd,
And from her wild sequester'd seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul;
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels join'd the sound;

Through glades and glooms the mingled
measure stole,
Or o'er some haunted stream with fond
delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.
But, O, how alter'd was its sprightlier
tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest
hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gem'd with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket
rung,
The hunter's call to Faun and Dryad
known!
The oak-crowned sisters and their chaste-
ey'd queen,
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green;
Brown Exercise rejoic'd to hear,
And Sport leapt up and seiz'd his beechen
spear.
Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest,
But soon he saw the brisk-awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he lov'd
the best;

They would have thought, who heard
the strain,
They saw in Tempe's vale her native
maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the
strings,
Love fram'd with Mirth a gay fantastic
round;
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone
unbound;
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy
wings.
O Music, sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid,
Why, goddess, why to us denied
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside?
As in that lov'd Athenian bower,
You learn'd an all-commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endear'd,
Can well recall what then it heard.
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page:

'T is said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age.
Ev'n all at once together found
Cecilia's mingled world of sound.
O bid our vain endeavors cease,
Revive the just designs of Greece!
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

Ode to Evening

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales,

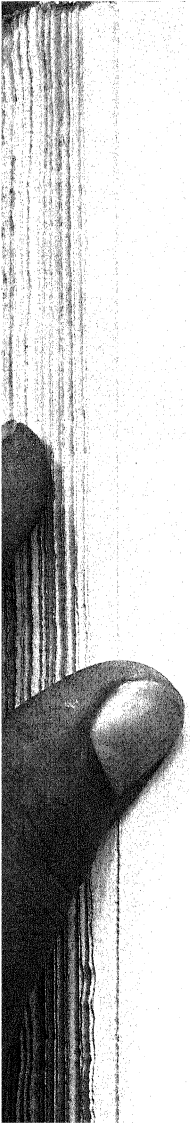
O nymph reserv'd, while now the bright-hair'd Sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat
With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid compos'd,
To breathe some soften'd strain,



Samuel Johnson



The Vanity of Human Wishes



Let Observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind, from China to Peru;
Remark each anxious toil, each eager strife,
And watch the busy scenes of crowded life:
Then say how hope and fear, desire and hate,
O'erspread with snares the clouded maze of fate,
Where wav'ring man, betray'd by vent'rous pride
To tread the dreary paths without a guide,
As treach'rous phantoms in the mist delude,
Shuns fancied ills, or chases airy good;
How rarely reason guides the stubborn choice,
Rules the bold hand, or prompts the suppliant voice;
How nations sink, by darling schemes oppress'd,
When Vengeance listens to the fool's request.

Fate wings with ev'ry wish th' afflictive dart,
Each gift of nature and each grace of art;
With fatal heat impetuous courage glows,
With fatal sweetness elocution flows,
Impeachment stops the speaker's pow'rful breath,
And restless fire precipitates on death.
But, scarce observ'd, the knowing and the bold
Fall in the gen'ral massacre of gold;
Wide-wasting pest! that rages unconfin'd,
And crowds with crimes the records of mankind:
For gold his sword the hireling ruffian draws,
For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws:
Wealth heap'd on wealth nor truth nor safety buys;
The dangers gather as the treasures rise.
Let hist'ry tell, where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the madded land,
When statutes glean the refuse of the sword,
How much more safe the vassal than the lord;

Low sculks the hind beneath the rage of power,
And leaves the wealthy traitor in the Tower,
Untouch'd his cottage, and his slumbers sound,
Though Confiscation's vultures hover round.

The needy traveller, serene and gay,
Walks the wild heath, and sings his toil away.
Does envy seize thee? Crush th' upbraiding joy,
Increase his riches, and his peace destroy:
Now fears in dire vicissitude invade;
The rustling brake alarms, and quiv'ring shade;
Nor light nor darkness bring his pain relief,—
One shows the plunder, and one hides the thief.

Yet still one gen'ral cry the skies assails,
And gain and grandeur load the tainted gales;
Few know the toiling statesman's fear or care,
Th' insidious rival and the gaping heir.

Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
With cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth,

See motley life in modern trappings dress'd,
And feed with varied fools th' eternal jest.
Thou who couldst laugh where want enchain'd caprice,
Toil crush'd conceit, and man was of a piece;
Where wealth unlov'd without a mourner died;
And scarce a sycophant was fed by pride;
Where ne'er was known the form of mock debate,
Or seen a new-made mayor's unwieldy state;
Where change of fav'rites made no change of laws,
And senates heard before they judg'd a cause;
How wouldst thou shake at Britain's modish tribe,
Dart the quick taunt, and edge the piercing gibe!
Attentive truth and nature to descry,
And pierce each scene with philosophick eye.
To thee were solemn toys or empty show
The robes of pleasure and the veils of woe:
All aid the farce, and all thy mirth maintain,

Whose joys are causeless, or whose griefs are vain.
Such was the scorn that fill'd the sage's mind,
Renew'd at ev'ry glance on human kind.
How just that scorn ere yet thy voice declare,
Search ev'ry state, and canvass ev'ry prayer.
Unnumber'd suppliants crowd Preferment's gate,
Athirst for wealth, and burning to be great;
Delusive Fortune hears th' incessant call:
They mount, they shine, evaporate, and fall.
On ev'ry stage the foes of peace attend;
Hate dogs their flight, and insult mocks their end;
Love ends with hope; the sinking statesman's door
Pours in the morning worshipper no more;
For growing names the weekly scribbler lies,
To growing wealth the dedicator flies;
From ev'ry room descends the painted face,
That hung the bright palladium of the place,

And smok'd in kitchens, or in auction sold,
To better features yields the frame of gold;
For now no more we trace in ev'ry line
Heroick worth, benevolence divine:
The form distorted justifies the fall,
And detestation rids th' indignant wall.
But will not Britain hear the last appeal,
Sign her foes' doom, or guard her fav'rites' zeal?
Through Freedom's sons no more remonstrance rings,
Degrading nobles and controlling kings;
Our supple tribes repress their patriot throats,
And ask no questions but the price of votes;
With weekly libels and septennial ale,
Their wish is full to riot and to rail.
In full-blown dignity see Wolsey stand,
Law in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the church, the realm, their pow'rs consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows:
Still to new heights his restless wishes tow'r,
Claim leads to claim, and pow'r advances pow'r;

Till conquest unresisted ceas'd to please,
And rights submitted left him none to seize.
At length his sov'reign frowns;—the train of state
Mark the keen glance, and watch the sign to hate.
Where'er he turns he meets a stranger's eye;
His suppliants scorn him, and his followers fly:
Now drops at once the pride of awful state,
The golden canopy, the glitt'ring plate,
The regal palace, the luxurious board,
The liv'ried army, and the menial lord.
With age, with cares, with maladies oppress'd,
He seeks the refuge of monastick rest.
Grief aids disease, remember'd folly stings,
And his last sighs reproach the faith of kings.
Speak thou, whose thoughts at humble peace repine,—
Shall Wolsey's wealth, with Wolsey's end, be thine?
Or liv'st thou now, with safer pride content,
The wisest justice on the banks of Trent?

For why did Wolsey near the steeps of fate
On weak foundations raise th' enormous weight?
Why, but to sink beneath misfortune's blow,
With louder ruin, to the gulfs below?
What gave great Villiers to th' assassin's knife,
And fix'd disease on Harley's closing life?
What murder'd Wentworth and what exil'd Hyde,
By kings protected, and to kings allied?
What but their wish indulg'd in courts to shine,
And pow'r too great to keep or to resign?
When first the college rolls receive his name,
The young enthusiast quits his ease for fame;
Resistless burns the fever of renown,
Caught from the strong contagion of the gown:
O'er Bodley's dome his future labours spread,
And Bacon's mansion trembles o'er his head.
Are these thy views? Proceed, illustrious youth,
And Virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!

Yet should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;
Should Reason guide thee with her brightest ray,
And pour on misty Doubt resistless day;
Should no false kindness lure to loose delight,
Nor praise relax, nor difficulty fright;
Should tempting Novelty thy cell refrain,
And Sloth effuse her opiate fumes in vain;
Should Beauty blunt on fops her fatal dart,
Nor claim the triumph of a letter'd heart;
Should no Disease thy torpid veins invade,
Nor Melancholy's phantoms haunt thy shade;
Yet hope not life from grief or danger free,
Nor think the doom of man revers'd for thee:
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
And pause awhile from Letters, to be wise;
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail—
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the gaol.
See nations, slowly wise and meanly just,
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.

If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end.
Nor deem, when Learning her last prize bestows,
The glitt'ring eminence exempt from woes:
See, when the vulgar 'scape, despis'd or aw'd,
Rebellion's vengeful talons seize on Laud!
From meaner minds though smaller fines content,
The plunder'd palace or sequester'd rent,
Mark'd out by dang'rous parts he meets the shock,
And fatal Learning leads him to the block:
Around his tomb let Art and Genius weep,
But hear his death, ye blockheads, hear and sleep.
The festal blazes, the triumphal show,
The ravish'd standard, and the captive foe,
The Senate's thanks, the gazette's pompous tale,
With force resistless o'er the brave prevail.
Such bribes the rapid Greek o'er Asia whirl'd;
For such the steady Romans shook the world;
For such in distant lands the Britons shine,
And stain with blood the Danube or the Rhine:

This pow'r has praise, that virtue scarce can warm,
Till fame supplies the universal charm.
Yet Reason frowns on War's unequal game,
Where wasted nations raise a single name,
And mortgag'd states their grandsires' wreaths regret,
From age to age in everlasting debt;
Wreaths which at last the dear-bought right convey
To rust on medals, or on stones decay.
On what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide:
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacifick sceptres yield,—
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their pow'rs combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign:
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;

With unexpected legions bursts away,
And sees defenceless realms receive his sway:
Short sway!—fair Austria spreads her mournful charms;
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;
The fierce Croatian and the wild Hussar,
With all the sons of ravage, crowd the war.
The baffled prince in honour's flatt'ring bloom
Of hasty greatness finds the fatal doom,
His foes' derision and his subjects' blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame.
Enlarge my life with multitude of days!
In health, in sickness, thus the suppliant prays;
Hides from himself his state, and shuns to know,
That life protracted is protracted woe.
Time hovers o'er, impatient to destroy,
And shuts up all the passages of joy:
In vain their gifts the bounteous seasons pour,
The fruit autumnal and the vernal flow'r;

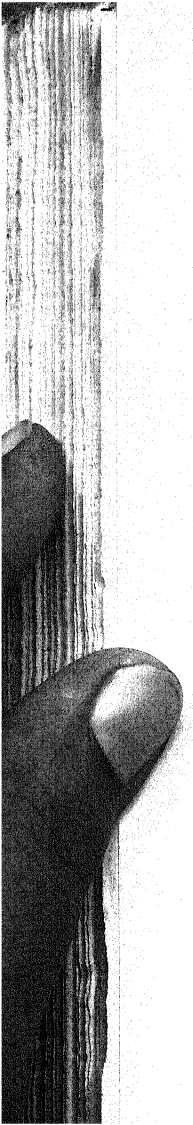
With listless eyes the dotard views the store:
He views, and wonders that they please no more.
Now pall the tasteless meats and joyless wines,
And Luxury with sighs her slave resigns.
Approach, ye minstrels, try the soothing strain,
Diffuse the tuneful lenitives of pain:
No sounds, alas! would touch th' impervious ear,
Though dancing mountains witness'd Orpheus near;
Nor lute nor lyre his feeble pow'rs attend,
Nor sweeter musick of a virtuous friend;
But everlasting dictates crowd his tongue,
Perversely grave or positively wrong.
The still returning tale and ling'ring jest
Perplex the fawning niece and pamper'd guest,
While growing hopes scarce awe the gath'ring sneer,
And scarce a legacy can bribe to hear;
The watchful guests still hint the last offence,
The daughter's petulance, the son's expense,
Improve his heady rage with treach'rous skill,

Ye nymphs of rosy lips and radiant eyes,
Whom Pleasure keeps too busy to be wise;
Whom joys with soft varieties invite,—
By day the frolick, and the dance by night;
Who frown with vanity, who smile with art,
And ask the latest fashion of the heart,
What care, what rules, your heedless charms shall save,
Each nymph your rival, and each youth your slave?
Against your fame with fondness hate combines,
The rival batters, and the lover mines.
With distant voice neglected Virtue calls;
Less heard and less, the faint remonstrance falls:
Tir'd with contempt, she quits the slipp'ry reign,
And Pride and Prudence take her seat in vain.
In crowd at once, where none the pass defend,
The harmless freedom and the private friend.
The guardians yield, by force superior ply'd:
To Int'rest, Prudence; and to Flatt'ry, Pride.

Here Beauty falls betray'd, despis'd, distress'd,
And hissing Infamy proclaims the rest.
Where then shall Hope and Fear their objects find?
Must dull Suspense corrupt the stagnant mind?
Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate,
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?
Must no dislike alarm, no wishes rise,
No cries invoke the mercies of the skies?—
Enquirer, cease; petitions yet remain,
Which Heav'n may hear; nor deem Religion vain.
Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heav'n the measure and the choice;
Safe in his pow'r, whose eyes discern afar
The secret ambush of a specious pray'r.
Implore his aid, in his decisions rest,
Secure, whate'er he gives, he gives the best.
Yet when the sense of sacred presence fires,
And strong devotion to the skies aspires,
Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
Obedient passions, and a will resign'd;
For love, which scarce collective man can fill;

For patience, sov'reign o'er transmuted ill;
For faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
Counts death kind Nature's signal of retreat:
These goods for man the laws of Heav'n ordain;
These goods he grants, who grants the pow'r to gain;
With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
And makes the happiness she does not find.

William Cowper



The Winter Evening




Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spatter'd boots, strapp'd waist, and frozen locks,
News from all nations lumb'ring at his back.
True to his charge, the close-pack'd load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destin'd inn,
And having dropp'd th' expected bag—pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch,
Cold and yet cheerful: messenger of grief

Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some,
To him indiff'rent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes, and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writers' cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with am'rous sighs of absent swains,
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.
But oh th' important budget! usher'd in
With such heart-shaking music, who can say
What are its tidings? have our troops awak'd?
Or do they still, as if with opium drugg'd,
Snore to the murmurs of th' Atlantic wave?
Is India free? and does she wear her plum'd
And jewell'd turban with a smile of peace,
Or do we grind her still? The grand debate,
The popular harangue, the tart reply,
The logic, and the wisdom, and the wit,
And the loud laugh—I long to know them all;

I burn to set th' imprisoned wranglers free,
And give them voice and utt'rance once again.
Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
Not such his evening, who with shining face
Sweats in the crowded theatre, and squeez'd
And bor'd with elbow-points through both his sides,
Out-scolds the ranting actor on the stage;
Nor his, who patient stands till his feet throb,
And his head thumps, to feed upon the breath
Of patriots bursting with heroic rage,
Or placemen all tranquillity and smiles.
This folio of four pages, happy work!
Which not ev'n critics criticise; that holds
Inquisitive attention, while I read,

Fast bound in chains of silence, which the fair,
Though eloquent themselves, yet fear to break;
What is it but a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns?
Here runs the mountainous and craggy ridge
That tempts ambition. On the summit, see,
The seals of office glitter in his eyes;
He climbs, he pants, he grasps them. At his heels,
Close at his heels, a demagogue ascends,
And with a dext'rous jerk soon twists him down,
And wins them, but to lose them in his turn.
Here rills of oily eloquence in soft
Meanders lubricate the course they take;
The modest speaker is ashamed and grieved
T' engross a moment's notice, and yet begs,
Begs a propitious ear for his poor thoughts,
However trivial all that he conceives.
Sweet bashfulness! it claims, at least, this praise:
The dearth of information and good sense

That it foretells us, always comes to pass.
Cataracts of declamation thunder here,
There forests of no meaning spread the page
In which all comprehension wanders lost;
While fields of pleasantry amuse us there
With merry descants on a nation's woes.
The rest appears a wilderness of strange
But gay confusion; roses for the cheeks
And lilies for the brows of faded age,
Teeth for the toothless, ringlets for the bald,
Heav'n, earth, and ocean plunder'd of their sweets,
Nectareous essences, Olympian dews,
Sermons and city feasts, and fav'rite airs,
Ethereal journeys, submarine exploits,
And Katterfelto, with his hair on end
At his own wonders, wond'ring for his bread.
'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
To peep at such a world; to see the stir
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on th' uninjur'd ear.

Compensating his loss with added hours
Of social converse and instructive ease,
And gathering, at short notice, in one group
The family dispers'd, and fixing thought,
Not less dispers'd by daylight and its cares.
I crown thee King of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
No rattling wheels stop short before these gates;
No powder'd pert, proficient in the art
Of sounding an alarm, assaults these doors
Till the street rings; no stationary steeds
Cough their own knell, while, heedless of the sound,
The silent circle fan themselves, and quake:
But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom; buds, and leaves, and sprigs,
And curling tendrils, gracefully dispos'd,

Follow the nimble finger of the fair;
A wreath that cannot fade, of flow'rs that blow
With most success when all besides decay.
The poet's or historian's page, by one
Made vocal for th' amusement of the rest;
The sprightly lyre, whose treasure of sweet sounds
The touch from many a trembling chord shakes out;
And the clear voice symphonious, yet distinct,
And in the charming strife triumphant still;
Beguile the night, and set a keener edge
On female industry: the threaded steel
Flies swiftly, and unfelt the task proceeds.
The volume clos'd, the customary rites
Of the last meal commence. A Roman meal,
Such as the mistress of the world once found
Delicious, when her patriots of high note,
Perhaps by moonlight, at their humble doors,
And under an old oak's domestic shade,
Enjoy'd, spare feast! a radish and an egg.

Ensanguin'd hearts, clubs typical of strife,
And spades, the emblems of untimely graves.
What should be, and what was an hour-glass once,
Becomes a dice-box, and a billiard mace
Well does the work of his destructive scythe.
Thus deck'd, he charms a world whom fashion blinds
To his true worth, most pleas'd when idle most,
Whose only happy are their wasted hours.
Ev'n misses, at whose age their mothers wore
The back-string and the bib, assume the dress
Of womanhood, sit pupils in the school
Of card-devoted time, and night by night
Plac'd at some vacant corner of the board,
Learn ev'ry trick, and soon play all the game.
But truce with censure. Roving as I rove,
Where shall I find an end, or how proceed?
As he that travels far, oft turns aside
To view some rugged rock or mould'ring tow'r,
Which seen, delights him not; then coming home.

Describes and prints it, that the world
may know
How far he went for what was nothing
worth;
So I, with brush in hand and pallet
spread,
With colours mixed for a far diff'rent use,
Paint cards and dolls, and ev'ry idle thing
That fancy finds in her excursive flights.
Come, Evening, once again, season of
peace;
Return, sweet Evening, and continue long!
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow-moving, while the
night
Treads on thy sweeping train; one hand
employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charg'd for
man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day;
Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing
aid,
Like homely-featured night, of clust'ring
gems;
A star or two just twinkling on thy
brow
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine
No less than hers, not worn indeed on
high

With ostentatious pageantry, but set
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.
Come then, and thou shalt find thy vot'ry calm,
Or make me so. Composure is thy gift:
And whether I devote thy gentle hours
To books, to music, or the poet's toil;
To weaving nets for bird-alluring fruit;
Or twining silken threads round iv'ry reels,
When they command whom man was born to please;
I slight thee not, but make thee welcome still.
Just when our drawing-rooms begin to blaze
With lights, by clear reflection multiplied
From many a mirror, in which he of Gath,
Goliath, might have seen his giant bulk
Whole without stooping, tow'ring crest and all,
My pleasures too begin. But me perhaps
The glowing hearth may satisfy awhile
With faint illumination, that uplifts
The shadow to the ceiling, there by fits
Dancing uncouthly to the quiv'ring flame.
Not undelightful is an hour to me
So spent in parlour twilight; such a gloom

Suits well the thoughtful or unthinking mind,
The mind contemplative, with some new theme
Pregnant, or indispos'd alike to all.
Laugh ye, who boast your more mercurial pow'rs,
That never feel a stupor, know no pause,
Nor need one; I am conscious, and confess,
Fearless, a soul that does not always think.
Me oft has fancy, ludicrous and wild,
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gaz'd, myself creating what I saw.
Nor less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars
Pendulous, and foreboding, in the view
Of superstition, prophesying still,
Though still deceiv'd, some stranger's near approach.
'T is thus the understanding takes repose
In indolent vacuity of thought,
And sleeps and is refresh'd. Meanwhile the face
Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
Of deep deliberation, as the man

Were task'd to his full strength, absorb'd
and lost.
Thus oft, reclin'd at ease, I lose an hour
At evening, till at length the freezing
blast,
That sweeps the bolted shutter, summons
home
The recollected powers, and snapping
short
The glassy threads with which the fancy
weaves
Her brittle toys, restores me to myself.
How calm is my recess, and how the
frost,
Raging abroad, and the rough wind,
endear
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd
within!
I saw the woods and fields at close of
day
A variegated show; the meadows green,
Though faded; and the lands, where lately
wav'd
The golden harvest, of a mellow brown,
Upturn'd so lately by the forceful share:
I saw far off the weedy fallows smile
With verdure not unprofitable, graz'd
By flocks, fast feeding, and selecting each
His fav'rite herb; while all the leafless
groves

That skirt th' horizon, wore a sable hue,
Scarce notic'd in the kindred dusk of eve.
To-morrow brings a change, a total change!
Which even now, though silently perform'd
And slowly, and by most unfelt, the face
Of universal nature undergoes.
Fast falls a fleecy show'r: the downy flakes
Descending, and, with never-ceasing lapse,
Softly alighting upon all below,
Assimilate all objects. Earth receives
Gladly the thick'ning mantle, and the green
And tender blade that fear'd the chilling blast
Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.
In such a world, so thorny, and where none
Finds happiness unblighted, or, if found,
Without some thistly sorrow at its side,
It seems the part of wisdom, and no sin
Against the law of love, to measure lots
With less distinguish'd than ourselves, that thus
We may with patience bear our mod'rate ills,

And sympathise with others, suff'ring more.
Ill fares the trav'ller now, and he that stalks
In pond'rous boots beside his reeking team.
The wain goes heavily, impeded sore
By congregated loads adhering close
To the clogg'd wheels; and in its sluggish pace
Noiseless appears a moving hill of snow.
The toiling steeds expand the nostril wide,
While ev'ry breath, by respiration strong
Forc'd downward, is consolidated soon
Upon their jutting chests. He, form'd to bear
The pelting brunt of the tempestuous night,
With half-shut eyes and pucker'd cheeks, and teeth
Presented bare against the storm, plods on.
One hand secures his hat, save when with both
He brandishes his pliant length of whip,
Resounding oft, and never heard in vain.
Oh happy! and in my account, denied
That sensibility of pain with which
Refinement is endu'd, thrice happy thou.

Thy frame, robust and hardy, feels indeed
The piercing cold, but feels it unimpair'd.
The learnèd finger never need explore
Thy vig'rous pulse; and the unhealthful East,
That breathes the spleen, and searches ev'ry bone
Of the infirm, is wholesome air to thee.
Thy days roll on exempt from household care;
The wagon is thy wife; and the poor beasts
That drag the dull companion to and fro,
Thine helpless charge, dependent on thy care.
Ah, treat them kindly! rude as thou appear'st,
Yet show that thou hast mercy, which the great,
With needless hurry whirl'd from place to place,
Humane as they would seem, not always show.
Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat,
Such claim compassion in a night like this,
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long

They brave the season, and yet find at eve,
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.
The frugal housewife trembles when she lights
Her scanty stock of brushwood, blazing clear,
But dying soon, like all terrestrial joys.
The few small embers left she nurses well,
And while her infant race, with outspread hands,
And crowded knees, sit cow'ring o'er the sparks,
Retires, content to quake, so they be warm'd.
The man feels least, as more inured than she
To winter, and the current in his veins
More briskly moved by his severer toil;
Yet he too finds his own distress in theirs.
The taper soon extinguish'd, which I saw
Dangled along at the cold finger's end
Just when the day declin'd, and the brown loaf
Lodg'd on the shelf, half eaten without sauce
Of sav'ry cheese, or butter costlier still,
Sleep seems their only refuge: for, alas!
Where penury is felt the thought is chain'd,

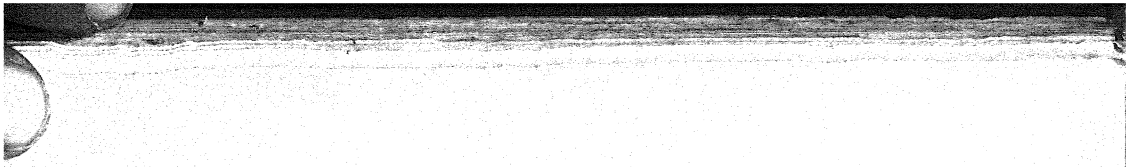
And sweet colloquial pleasures are but few.
With all this thrift they thrive not. All the care,
Ingenious parsimony takes, but just
Saves the small inventory, bed and stool,
Skillet and old carv'd chest, from public sale.
They live, and live without extorted alms
From grudging hands, but other boast have none
To soothe their honest pride, that scorns to beg;
Nor comfort else, but in their mutual love.
I praise you much, ye meek and patient pair,
For ye are worthy; choosing rather far
A dry but independent crust, hard earn'd,
And eaten with a sigh, than to endure
The rugged frowns and insolent rebuffs
Of knaves in office, partial in the work
Of distribution; lib'ral of their aid
To clam'rous importunity in rags,
But ofttimes deaf to suppliants who would blush
To wear a tatter'd garb however coarse,
Whom famine cannot reconcile to filth;
These asked with painful shyness, and refus'd

I studied, priz'd, and wish'd that I had known
Ingenious Cowley! and though now reclaim'd
By modern lights from an erroneous taste,
I cannot but lament thy splendid wit
Entangled in the cobwebs of the schools;
I still revere thee, courtly though retir'd,
Though stretch'd at ease at Chertsey's silent bow'rs,
Not unemploy'd, and finding rich amends
For a lost world in solitude and verse.
'Tis born with all: the love of Nature's works
Is an ingredient in the compound, man,
Infus'd at the creation of the kind.
And though th' Almighty Maker has throughout
Discriminated each from each, by strokes
And touches of his hand, with so much art
Diversified, that two were never found
Twins at all points — yet this obtains in all,
That all discern a beauty in his works,
And all can taste them: minds that have been form'd
And tutor'd with a relish more exact,
But none without some relish, none unmov'd.

It is a flame that dies not even there
Where nothing feeds it: neither business, crowds,
Nor habits of luxurious city life,
Whatever else they smother of true worth
In human bosoms, quench it or abate.
The villas with which London stands begirt,
Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,
Prove it. A breath of unadult'rate air,
The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
Ev'n in the stifling bosom of the town,
A garden in which nothing thrives has charms
That soothe the rich possessor; much consol'd
That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the wall
He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
That Nature lives; that sight-refreshing green
Is still the liv'ry she delights to wear,
Though sickly samples of th' exub'rant whole.



Robert Burns



The Twa Dogs



'T was in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' Auld King Coil,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs, that were na thrang at hame
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I 'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Whare sailors gang to fish for cod.

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gypsy's messin.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,

But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit,
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa' in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

Cæsar

I 've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd ava.

Our laird gets in his rackèd rents,
His coals, his kain, an' a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel';
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse
As lang 's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en it 's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry first are stechin',
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and siclike trashtrie,
That 's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own it 's past my comprehension.

Luath

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh;
A cotter howkin' in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like,
Himsel', a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld an' hunger:
But, how it comes, I never kent yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

Cæsar

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit?
L—d, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor folk,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd on our laird's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,

Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash;
He 'll stamp, an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He 'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches?

Luath

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think:
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink,
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're aye in less or mair provided,
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives,
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak' the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:

They 'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation 's comin',
An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmass returns,
They get the jovial, ranting kirns,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth
Forgets there 's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin' pipe, an' sneeshin' mill,
Are handed round wi' richt guid will;
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it 's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre often play'd;
There 's monie a creditable stock,
O' decent, honest, fawsont folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel' the faster

In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha, aiblins, thrang a-parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

Cæsar

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it!
Say rather, gaun as premiers lead him,
An' saying ay or no's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To make a tour, an' tak' a whirl,
To learn bon ton, an' see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;
Or by Madrid he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Love-making among groves o' myrtles:
Then bowses drumly German water,
To mak' himsel' look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of carnival signoras.

For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction!

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They 're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles o'er the wee bit cup an' platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like onie unhang'd blackguard.

There 's some exception, man an' woman;
But this is gentry's life in common.

By this the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin' i' the loan;
When up they gat, an' shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na *men*, but *dogs*;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

The Cotter's Saturday Night



My lov'd, my honor'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh:
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
"An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's ee, and flush her cheek:

With heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye;
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

O happy love!—where love like this is found!—
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!

I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale".

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth,
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth;
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple
board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's
food,
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows
her cood;
The dame brings forth in complimental
mood,
To grace the lad, her well-hain'd keb-
buck fell,
An' aft he 's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was
i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious
face
They, round the ingle, form a circle
wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's
pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in
Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with
solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or, Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
How his first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing",
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in his book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest;
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man 's the noblest work of God":
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be bless'd with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert:
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

George Crabbe

From Truth and Nature shall we widely
stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the
way?
.
No; cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which neither groves nor happy valleys
boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse
relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other
mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the Cot,
As Truth will paint it, and as Bards will
not:
Nor you, ye Poor, of letter'd scorn com-
plain,
To you the smoothest song is smooth in
vain;
O'ercome by labour, and bow'd down by
time,
Feel you the barren flattery of a rhyme?
Can poets soothe you, when you pine for
bread,
By winding myrtles round your ruin'd
shed?—
Can their light tales your weighty griefs
o'erpower,
Or glad with airy mirth the toilsome
hour?

Lo! where the heath, with withering brake grown o'er,
Lends the light turf that warms the neighbouring poor;
From thence a length of burning sand appears,
Where the thin harvest waves its wither'd ears;
Rank weeds, that every art and care defy,
Reign o'er the land and rob the blighted rye:
There thistles stretch their prickly arms afar,
And to the ragged infant threaten war;
There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
The slimy mallow waves her silky leaf;
O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
And a sad splendour vainly shines around.

Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.
Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows.
Pierced by no crime and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane — then linger in the mead;
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,

And pluck the blossoms where the wild
bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with
ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender
grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse
are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's
bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they
make their way
O'er its rough bridge — and there behold
the bay!
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly
run—
The ships at distance and the boats at
hand;
And now they walk upon the seaside sand,
Counting the number and what kind they
be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea;
Now arm in arm, now parted, they be-
hold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles
roll'd;
The timid girls, half dreading their de-
sign,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,

And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below;
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon.
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour fire—
Tokens of bliss! "Oh! horrible! a wave
Roars as it rises — Save me, Edward! save!"
She cries: — Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in — truth, terror, and the day!

Strolling Players



(FROM THE BOROUGH,
LETTER XII)

Sad happy race! Soon raised and soon
depress'd,
Your days all pass'd in jeopardy and jest;
Poor without prudence, with afflictions
vain,
Not warn'd by misery, not enrich'd by
gain:
Whom Justice, pitying, chides from place
to place,
A wandering, careless, wretched, merry
race,
Who cheerful looks assume, and play the
parts
Of happy rovers with repining hearts;
Then cast off care, and, in the mimic
pain
Of tragic woe, feel spirits light and vain,
Distress and hope—the mind's, the body's,
wear,
The man's affliction and the actor's tear:

STROLLING PLAYERS

Alternate times of fasting and excess
Are yours, ye smiling children of distress.
 Slaves though ye be, your wandering
 freedom seems,
And with your varying views and restless
 schemes,
Your griefs are transient, as your joys
 are dreams.

The Founder of the Alms-house



(FROM THE BOROUGH, LETTER XIII)

Leave now our streets, and in yon plain behold
Those pleasant Seats for the reduced and old;
A Merchant's gift, whose wife and children died;
When he to saving all his powers applied;
He wore his coat till bare was every thread,
And with the meanest fare his body fed.
He had a female cousin, who with care
Walk'd in his steps, and learn'd of him to spare;
With emulation and success they strove,
Improving still, still seeking to improve,
As if that useful knowledge they would gain—
How little food would human life sustain:

No pauper came their table's crumbs to crave;
Scraping they lived, but not a scrap they gave:
When beggars saw the frugal Merchant pass,
It moved their pity and they said "Alas!
Hard is thy fate, my brother," and they felt
A beggar's pride as they that pity dealt.
The dogs, who learn of man to scorn the poor,
Bark'd him away from every decent door;
While they who saw him bare but thought him rich,
To show respect or scorn they knew not which.
But while our Merchant seemed so base and mean,
He had his wanderings, sometimes "not unseen";
To give in secret was a favourite act,
Yet more than once they took him in the fact:
To scenes of various woe he nightly went,
And serious sums in healing misery spent;
Oft has he cheered the wretched at a rate
For which he daily might have dined on plate;
He has been seen—his hair all silver white,

Shaking and shivering — as he stole by night,
To feed unenvied on his still delight.
A twofold taste he had; to give and spare,
Both were his duties, and had equal care.
It was his joy to sit alone and fast,
Then send a widow and her boys repast:
Tears in his eyes would spite of him appear,
But he from other eyes has kept the tear:
All in a wintry night from far he came
To soothe the sorrows of a suffering dame,
Whose husband robb'd him, and to whom he meant
A ling'ring but reforming punishment:
Home then he walk'd, and found his anger rise
When fire and rushlight met his troubled eyes;
But these extinguish'd, and his prayer address'd
To Heaven in hope, he calmly sank to rest.

A Storm on the East Coast



(FROM THE BOROUGH, LETTER I)

View now the Winter storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'er-shroud:
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud and furious as the storm.
All where the eye delights yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,

Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then, reflowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.
Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.
High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flocks of Wild-duck stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north

And one yet crawls on earth, of whom, I say,
That what he has he cannot take away:
Her mother's father, one who has a store
Of this world's goods and always looks for more;
But, next his money, loves the girl at heart,
And she will have it when they come to part."
"Sir," said the youth, his terrors all awake,
"Hear me, I pray, I beg—for mercy's sake!
Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
Would you admit the truths that I protest
Are such—your pardon—"
"Pardon, good my friend,
I not alone will pardon, I commend;
Think you that I have no remembrance left
Of youthful love and Cupid's cunning theft?
How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
How hearts are gained and how exchange is made?
Come, sir, your hand—"
"In mercy hear me now!"
"I cannot hear you, time will not allow:

You know my station, what on me depends,
For ever needed—but we part as friends;
And here comes one who will the whole explain,
My better self—and we shall meet again:"
"Sir, I entreat—"
"Then be entreaty made
To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
A little teasing, but she will comply,
And loves her niece too fondly to deny."
"O! he is mad, and miserable I!"
Exclaimed the Youth; "but let me now collect
My scatter'd thoughts; I something must effect."
Hurrying she came—"Now what has he confess'd,
Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
What! he has grieved you! Yet he too approves
The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.
But now for business: tell me, did you think
That we should always at your meetings wink?
Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring
To me all secrets—O you wicked thing!

AN ENTANGLEMENT

From the pine hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen;
Before him swallows gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from time, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

William Wordsworth



The Reverie of Poor Susan



At the corner of Wood Street, when day-
light appears,
Hangs a thrush that sings loud—it has
sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and
has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the
Bird.

'T is a note of enchantment; what ails
her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Loth-
bury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of
Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of
the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with
her pail,

And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes.

Expostulation and Reply




"Why, William, on that old gray stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be
Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

—"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old gray stone,
And dream my time away."

The Tables Turned



AN EVENING
SCENE, ON THE
SAME SUBJECT

Up! up! my Friend, and quit your books,
 Or surely you 'll grow double.
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
 Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
 A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
 His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 't is a dull and endless strife:
 Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
 There 's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
 He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
 Let Nature be your teacher.

THE TABLES TURNED

She has a world of ready wealth,
 Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
 Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
 May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
 Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
 Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:
 —We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
 Close up those barren leaves:
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.

Lines

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR




Five years have pass'd; five summers, with
the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain
springs
With a soft inland murmur.[1] Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and
connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these or-
chard tufts,

[1] The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever Nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,

And their glad animal movements all
gone by)
To me was all in all. I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then
to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. That time is
past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other
gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would be-
lieve,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often-
times
The still, sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, though of ample
power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal

Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

Lines



WRITTEN IN
EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes,
 While in a grove I sat reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
 The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
 What man has made of man.

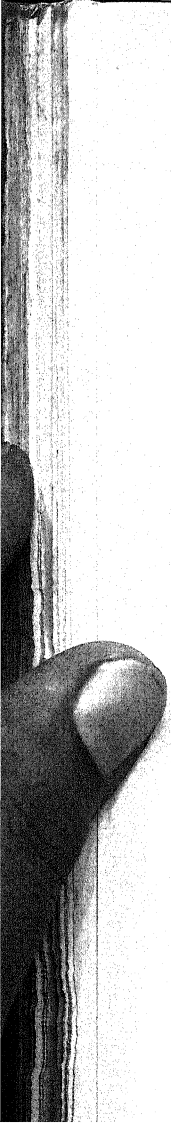
Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
 The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 't is my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played;
 Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
 It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
 To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
 That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
 If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
 What man has made of man?

Lucy Gray;
Or, Solitude



Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day,
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father, will I gladly do!
'T is scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon."

At this the Father raised his hook
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down:
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night,
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet!"—
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall:

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



The Ancient Mariner



PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?" "With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,

Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
'Ah, wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!'

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
''T was right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

"See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

"The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

"And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

"Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan,)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawned—they dropped their
arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,

How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

"And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;

Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbour-bar
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

"The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!

It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer.
The planks look warped! and see those
sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared.'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;

The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay:
The ship went down like lead.

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.

'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer.

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!—
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man, and bird, and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;

For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

Adam Skirving



Johnnie Cope

Cope sent a challenge frae Dunbar,
"Charlie, meet me, an' ye daur,
And I'll learn you the airt o' war,
If you'll meet wi' me in the morning".

Hey, Johnnie Cope! are ye waking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were waking I would wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

When Charlie looked the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from:
"Come, follow me, my merrie men,
And we'll meet Johnnie Cope i' the morning.

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

"Now, Johnnie, be as good as your word,
Come let us try baith fire and sword,
And dinna flee like a frighted bird,
That's chased frae its nest i' the morning."

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

JOHNNIE COPE

When Johnnie Cope he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss
To hae a horse in readiness,
To flee awa' i' the morning.

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

"Fye now, Johnnie, get up and rin,
The Highland bagpipes mak' a din,
It 's best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 't will be a bluddie morning."

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

When Johnnie Cope to Dunbar came,
They speir'd at him, "Where 's a' your men?"
"The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning."

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

"Now, Johnnie, troth ye werena blate
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
So early in the morning."

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

"In faith," quo Johnnie, "I got sic flegs
Wi' their claymores and filabegs,
If I face them deil break my legs,
So I wish you a' good morning."

Hey, Johnnie Cope! &c.

Jane Elliot



The Flowers of the Forest



I 've heard them lilting at the ewe-milking,
Lasses a-lilting before the dawn of day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning;
The flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts in the morning nae blythe lads are scorning;
Lasses are lonely and dowie and wae;
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing;
Ilk ane lifts her leglin, and hies her away.

In har'st at the shearing, nae youths now are jearing;
Bandsters are runkled and lyart or gray;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching,
The flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae younkers are roaming
'Bout staks, with the lasses at bogle to play;

But ilk maid sits eerie, lamenting her deary,—
The flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the border!
The English for ance by guile wan the day;
The flowers of the Forest that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land are cauld in the clay.

We 'll hear nae mair lilting at the ewe-milking.
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
The flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.